

Star-Bulletin

FRONT
PAGE

Friday, August 16, 1981

Wong Met CIA Agents Introduced by Rewald

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Sunlin "Sunny" Wong, former president of Ronald Rewald's defunct investment firm, today acknowledged he had met a number of people he was told were CIA agents or related to the agency.

But he said that information came from Rewald.

Wong's testimony came as Rewald's attorney continued to question Wong about the scope of CIA involvement in Rewald's company.

Deputy Federal Public Defender Michael Levine asked Wong about the cost of setting up and running Bishop, Baldwin, Rewald, Dillingham & Wong offices in Hong Kong, New Zealand, Singapore and Taiwan. Wong said he set up the offices at Rewald's direction.

REWALD IS expected to testify that the CIA wanted those offices set up for agency contacts. Wong said Bishop, Baldwin consultants who ran those offices submitted a number of possible investments for BBRD&W that Rewald always rejected.

The government contends those offices were set up to enhance Rewald's image as an international businessman so that he could continue to attract people to put money into the company.

According to the government, no investments actually were made, however, and investors' money was spent on company overhead and Rewald's extravagant lifestyle.

Under Levine's questioning yesterday, Wong did say that he went on one trip to the Far East that he thought was paid for by the CIA. Levine hopes to prove to the jury through his cross-examination of Wong that the CIA directed and supervised the expenditure of some company funds.

That could clear Ronald Rewald of charges that he deliberately defrauded investors of millions of dollars.

BUT LEVINE is limited by a number of secret pretrial rulings by U.S. Judge Harold Fong on how far he can delve into CIA matters. Fong said he will only allow testimony concerning CIA management and supervision of Bishop, Baldwin funds.

Fong sharply warned Levine several times yesterday to stay within the boundaries set in the pretrial proceedings. Those boundaries were established to protect matters of national security while allowing relevant CIA evidence to come out in the trial.

The government contends the CIA's only involvement in the company was to pay telephone and telex bills for a "front company" Rewald agreed to man.

Under the arrangement, Rewald, Wong, or a Bishop, Baldwin secretary would handle calls coming in on a special phone line to H&H Enterprises. That fake company provided a cover for CIA agents operating overseas.

The government contends Rewald exploited that involvement to bilk investors out of millions of dollars.

Wong said on direct examination that the only calls he knew that came in on the CIA phones were "wrong numbers."

LEVINE YESTERDAY was able to introduce evidence during Wong's questioning that the former president met several people he believed were CIA agents and even traveled overseas on what he thought was a CIA mission.

In 1980, Rewald and Wong wrote a letter to then-CIA station chief Jack Rardin about a trip to the Far East in which they met with a CIA agent. That letter was introduced into evidence but the names of the country and CIA agent were blacked out.

While questioning Wong today, Assistant U.S. Attorney John Peyton inadvertently disclosed that the mystery country Wong visited was Hong Kong.

Wong said this morning that the trip had nothing to do with Bishop, Baldwin business.

He also said the Hong Kong trip was paid for with a Bishop, Baldwin check that Rewald said would be reimbursed by the CIA. According to financial records, however, the CIA did not pay for any BBRD&W travel expenses.

WONG AND Rewald said in the letter that the agent was "excited" about the prospects of using Bishop, Baldwin "for various cover operations."

When asked by Levine who he thought paid for the trip, Wong replied, "As far as I know, the CIA."

Wong, however, said yesterday he did not know if any Bishop, Baldwin funds were spent on the trip.

Levine also questioned Wong about his attempt to find office space in Honolulu for another man introduced to him by Rewald as a CIA agent.

Peyton argued that testimony about that incident was outside the boundaries set by the judge. But Levine said the matter concerned Bishop, Baldwin money because Wong was on salary with the company when he tried to find the man an office.

Referring to the man only as "John Doe 7," according to the judge's order, Wong said he took the man to several locations, "one that had a lot of foot traffic."

HE WAS unsuccessful in finding an office the man liked, so let one of his real estate associates take over the task.

John Doe 5
Mr. [REDACTED] claims to be a resident of [REDACTED] Hawaii. However, he has indicated that he hasn't been here in several years and apparently expects to spend at least the next four to six years in [REDACTED] Far East Loc. 5

He was very familiar with our company and excited about the prospects of possibly using us for various cover operations in the near future, in addition to the possibility of exploring contacts we have in various other regions.

DEAR JACK—A letter dated Sept. 12, 1980, from Ronald Rewald and Sunlin Wong to then-Hawaii CIA station chief Jack Rardin said a Far East CIA agent was interested in using their investment firm as cover for spying operations.